

AETC News Clips



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12 Sep 01

Military facilities in city lock up

Hospitals ready to treat casualties

By SIG CHRISTENSON
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

At the end of a surreal day of terror, carnage and national outrage, there was no doubt San Antonio and the rest of America was under siege.

Five MPs, four carrying loaded M-16s, routed evening traffic away from North Walters and Hood Street in Fort Sam Houston, as other soldiers set up floodlights.

"It's a sad day. It's a sad day for America today," said Lt. Col. Jesse J. Goggins, Fort Sam's police chief. "We've actually been attacked on our own soil."

Fort Sam and three Air Force bases in the Alamo City were sealed from the public in the wake of attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center and ordered to Threat Condition Delta, a status reserved for crisis and war.

Only mission-essential personnel remained on the city's installations as two military hospitals here prepared to take in casualties if ordered.

Fort Sam is the only installation in San Antonio open to the public, but as the day ended, it was closed to anyone who didn't have a Defense Department window sticker or military identification card.

Contractors and commercial trucks were routed to the post's Coliseum Road gate off Interstate 35.

"The intent of establishing Threatcon Delta is to minimize the risk," post spokesman Phil Reidinger said. "You can't stop it, but you can minimize it."

The actions came hours after the nation was stunned by the attacks as they unfolded on national television. Lackland and Randolph AFBs had been at the lowest threat condition as the day began, but jumped to Delta just before noon.

There was no indication that any specific threat was directed here, but the city's installations include two hospitals — Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam and Wilford Hall Medical Center near Lackland — that could be targets.

Military police ran checkpoints at post entrances on four major roadways, Walters Street, Binz-Engleman Road, Dickman Road and Nursery Road. Camp Bullis, a training area on the Northwest Side, was closed as well.

All military training flights were grounded at the request of the Federal Aviation Administration, said Dave Smith, a spokesman with the Air Education and Training Command.

Reagan-era Assistant Defense Secretary Lawrence Korb compared Tuesday's terrorist assault to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but noted: "We've lost more people today."

Former Air Force Secretary E. Whitten Peters said the evidence suggests a "very sophisticated organization" was involved in the attacks.

"I'm assuming that commercial airline pilots are not likely to have been willing to drive their aircraft into populated buildings, so my guess is that the terrorists were at the controls," he reasoned.

"America has been under a concerted attack no less awesome or as well-planned as the attack launched on 7 December 1941 at Pearl Harbor," said retired Army Col. David Hackworth, a syndicated columnist.

The order to go to Threatcon Delta was a first for Lackland, Randolph and 11 others in AETC.

Brooks AFB, a facility on the city's Southeast Side, also was at Delta, but Goggins and other commanders around town were saying little else about security measures.

One MP at the checkpoint, Sgt. Tanya Colonathi, said that while the loaded M-16s weren't chambered they could be "very quickly." Military police can fire on people to protect lives and property, but usually carry 9mm handguns.

Talk of war, and avenging America's dead, didn't concern Pfc. Loren Will, 21, of Hennessey, Okla. Will said his job simply is to answer "the call of the nation and follow the orders of the commander in chief."

But Colonathi, 24, of Miami, Fla., said she "very badly" wants revenge.

"All those innocent people who died," she said, "there should be a major payback for that."

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JERRY LARA/STAFF

Soldiers fill barriers with water Tuesday at the New Braunfels Avenue entrance to Fort Sam Houston. Only the two entrances on Walters were left open after the terrorist attacks on the East Coast.

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It's not the generals fighting the last war, but the politicians



**RICK
CASEY**

Gene Habiger, the retired Air Force general who heads the San Antonio Water System, spent part of Tuesday touring the agency's facilities with Bruce Baker, director of security. It was, I suspect, an automatic response.

Had he still been commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, which oversees Air Force and Navy nuclear forces, he would have been at headquarters in Omaha, directing efforts to tighten the already heavy security around the nation's nuclear facilities.

He would have had other duties as well, but those were classified.

If the thought of a general in charge of U.S. nuclear weapons brings images from "Dr. Strangelove" of a square-faced hawk eager to bomb the enemy back into the Stone Age, your literary database needs updating.

Habiger has been telling anyone who will listen — which does not include the nation's elected leaders — that we need to deeply slash our nuclear arsenal and concentrate on



HABIGER

defending ourselves against just the sort of terrorist activity that brought America into a new age Tuesday.

And he thinks it's just as crazy to spend a treasure on a missile de-

fense shield as it is to spend billions building and maintaining many more nuclear bombs than we can imagine using.

"We just saw a demonstration that you don't need a nuclear weapon to kill 30,000 people," Habiger said Tuesday afternoon.

"I really got focused on it in 1993 with the World Trade Center bombing that should have been a wake-up call," he said. "Come on, group! You're so worried about a rogue nation with nuclear missiles that you're willing to spend a minimum of \$100 billion for a system that will recognize them in 10 seconds and shoot them down? I mean, this is the kind of thing we should

be worrying about."

Habiger was prepared for an interview. "I've been giving this a lot of thought," he said.

Habiger is no recent convert. When he was still head of the Strategic Command, from 1996 to 1998, he made direct contact with his Russian counterparts to discuss reducing nuclear stockpiles on both sides.

"I asked them if they knew of Tom Clancy's books," he said. "They said no. I told them they needed to read him. 'It'll scare the crap out of you.'"

Clancy's 1994 book, "Debt of Honor," seems especially prescient to Habiger.

In it, a Japanese industrialist whose parents committed suicide on Saipan during World War II rather than be captured by U.S. forces sought revenge by funding a suicide mission in which the pilot of a Japanese passenger jumbo jet crashed into the Capitol during the president's State of the Union address.

"I don't want to sound too prophetic, but for the past five years I've been saying it's not a matter of if, but when," Habiger said.

It's been said that generals always fight the last war. But in this case, it's the politicians. Congress blocked Habiger's efforts to reduce our nuclear arsenal when he headed the Strategic Command.

"The U.S. Senate prohibited me from taking down the nuclear weapons below 6,000 even though I didn't need the weapons," he said.

Later, when he was appointed director of security for the Department of Energy in the wake of the Los Alamos scandal, Congress gave him only about half of the \$65 million he requested for his program in pittance of the savings his nuclear program would have produced.

And there are the White House's efforts to blow \$100 billion-plus on missile shields of dubious efficacy.

Habiger expects changes now.

"What we've seen today is going to change the social, political and economic fabric of our society," he said.

He said he was struck by the planning and coordination that went into Tuesday's attack.

"They hijacked airplanes that were fully loaded (with fuel) for transcontinental flights," he said, noting that the full tanks would be more destructive on impact.

"Also, Joe Sixpack doesn't pilot these planes. These folks have some training."

Habiger said the president will clearly have to make military strikes in response, but it will be hard "to get to the brain of the beast."

If we don't, he said, the question is whether we will "wait for the next round of attacks, which I guarantee will not be by airliners, but by something just as innovative."

Or will we put the kind of resources into fighting terrorism that we have been spending to keep fighting the Cold War?

To leave a message for Rick Casey, call (210) 250-3544, or e-mail rcasey@express-news.net



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Alamo City bases go to high alert

Sig Christenson

Express-News Writer

Almost 60 years after Pearl Harbor, America was shocked Tuesday with terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, sparking the shutdown of Fort Sam Houston and a dramatic tightening of security at three other local installations.

Commanders in the Alamo City reacted swiftly, with each military facility going to the nation's highest threat condition, Delta, by noon.

Fort Sam Houston, the city's only installation open to the public, closed all 26 gates. Only those with Defense Department windshield stickers or military ID cards were allowed onto the post, and commercial traffic was restricted.

Military police operated checkpoints at post entrances on four major roadways, Walters Street, Binz-Engleman Road, Dickman Road and Nursery Road. Camp Bullis, a training area on the Northwest Side, was closed as well.

Fort Sam went to Delta threat condition at 9:30 a.m. Randolph and Lackland AFBs went to Delta at 11:10 a.m. Brooks AFB, too, was at Delta.

All military training flights were grounded at the request of the Federal Aviation Administration, said Dave Smith, a spokesman with the Air Education and Training Command at Randolph.

"We're at the highest state of terrorist alert, which means that all of our intelligence is now telling us there has been terrorist activity at other installations and it's imminent at ours," said Ed Castillo, a spokesman at Lackland, home of Air Force basic training. "Although we have not had any specific threat against Lackland, it's prudent for us to enforce the Delta condition."

In Delta, only mission-essential personnel are allowed on installations. All others, including civilian workers, will be turned away and asked to telephone their supervisors Wednesday for further instructions.

There was no indication that any specific threat was posted to bases in San Antonio, but the city has four installations and two military hospitals —

America under attack

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- Second tower collapses
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- Military reaction
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- Attacks prompt Texas evacuations

National reaction

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- Authorities on alert from coast to coast
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including Wilford Hall Medical Center near Lackland — that could be targets for terrorists.

Seventy-one thousand civilian and military workers at Fort Sam, three Air Force bases, Brooke Army Medical Center and Wilford Hall help pump \$4.09 billion into the economy.

That includes \$1.07 billion generated by the city's 45,985 military retirees, while another 28,207 civil service retirees at the bases earn \$464.4 million.

Unlike the Japanese attack that started World War II, syndicated columnist and retired Army Col. David Hackworth said, there was no reason for the nation to have been taken by surprise.

"America has been under a concerted attack no less awesome or as well-planned as the attack launched ... at Pearl Harbor," he said.

"Americans have got to understand that we are at war, and it's a new face of war called terrorism," he said. "It's not spending \$100 billion on a defensive (missile) shield, nor is it deploying new \$7 billion highly mobile light brigades.

"We should have been preparing for terrorism by taking out Osama bin Laden, by beefing up the FBI," he said. "So now like Pearl Harbor; they've got us, let's get ready. Why do we always have to learn the hard way?"

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Anxious S.A. caught in attacks' grip

Roy Bragg

Express-News Writer

Panic gripped San Antonio today in the wake of terrorist strikes in Washington and New York, sparking lockdowns, mass closures and anxiety in every corner of the city.

Dozens of business offices closed. Tourist facilities were shut down. Government facilities were evacuated and checked for bombs. Meetings around the region were canceled.

Anxious parents rushed to schools to take their children home, while some banks reported a run from fearful depositors.

And at military bases, soldiers and airmen were put at the highest level of alert, called "Force Protection Delta."

Bank of America, which closed all its towers worldwide, including the one at 300 Convent St. in San Antonio, said customers were going to Boerne and other branches to withdraw money.

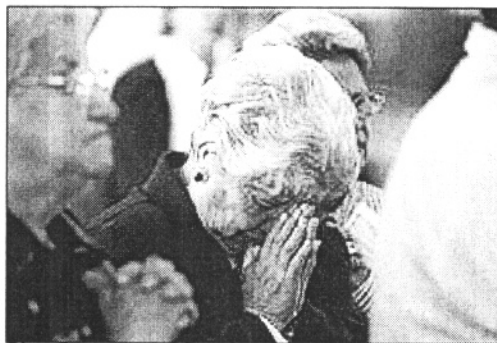
Bank officials issued a message instructing all branch managers to "use discretion" in emptying accounts, bank spokesman Will Holford said.

The bank encouraged managers to offer cashier's checks or wire transfers instead, and it is waiving the fee to get customers to accept the alternatives in place of cash.

"If they have enough cash on hand, which they don't, they can handle all the requests," Holford said, adding it will depend on the Federal Reserve as to whether the banks have regular hours.

Frost Bank reported that a pair of customers withdrew all their money.

Day care centers and schools across the city reported concerned parents pulling their children out of the facilities.



Olga Coronado of San Antonio prays while watching events transpire in New York with other fliers today at San Antonio International Airport. The Federal Aviation Administration suspended flights across the country after the attacks. Photo by Bahram Mark Sobhani/Express-News

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Several child care centers in San Antonio reported that parents were calling or picking up their children early because of the situation.

Liz Alaniz, director of Castle Hills Learning Center on Blanco Avenue, said that by about 11 a.m., about a dozen young children had left with their panicked parents.

"They just wanted to be with their kids," she said. "One woman came in almost crying, saying, 'I just want to be with my baby.'"

Schools remained open, but at Fort Sam Houston, parents picked up their children, associate superintendent Gail Siller said.

In the Somerset district, official Dennis DuPriest said he was spending most of this time this morning on the phone with parents, assuring them that their children were safe.

The city was beset with closures.

Police closed roads around Fort Sam Houston.

Trinity University canceled afternoon classes as well as athletic practices. The Alamo Community College District and St. Mary's canceled classes, too.

The Federal Aviation Administration issued an order shutting down the nation's airports shortly before 9 a.m., said Kevin Dolliole, the aviation director at San Antonio International Airport.

He said any aircraft in the air was advised to land at the nearest airport.

Dolliole added: "We've advised folks not to come to the airport. Until we receive further word from the FAA, we don't know how long it will last."

By 10:30 a.m., at least three flights had been diverted to San Antonio International Airport, and more than 200 incoming and outgoing flights in San Antonio were affected, many of them canceled.

Maurice Rose, the police chief for San Antonio airport, said no flights are allowed to depart, all security checkpoints are shut down and no vehicles are allowed to park in front of terminals.

San Antonio police secured their building on Nueva Street, checking all packages with more scrutiny and stationing officers out front to prohibit parking in front of the building.

Government facilities went dark.

The downtown federal building complex on Durango Boulevard was evacuated at 9:30 a.m. after receiving a bomb threat. Explosive-sniffing dogs swept through the building, finding nothing, but officials opted to return only a skeleton crew for the rest of the day.

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FOCUS: U.S. UNDER SIEGE

Consider this war

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon should be looked at in the same light as the attack on Pearl Harbor.

The United States should immediately declare war on the responsible terrorist group and any country that provides support or helps it in any way.

— Rich Despault

End of innocence

The innocence of the public, and its feeling of security within the boundaries of the United States, has forever been altered by this tragic and cowardly act. Those responsible must be made to pay a price that will be as memorialized as the destruction they have inflicted.

— Arnold W. Douthitt

Those overseas at risk

I returned from Saudi Arabia two months ago. My husband works for Lockheed and, unfortunately, is still there.

Because of the magnitude of the horrible and cowardly attack Tuesday morning, it is now open season on British and Americans in the Middle East. The mosques have been preaching for six months that if anyone killed an American, his family "would be blessed."

I have been spat at and had rocks thrown at me. I was in our compound when it was attacked by terrorists in July. There also are viral and chemical agents readily available to those who want to do mass harm.

I am heartsick for those who have been injured or lost their lives. I will pray for them and their families, but let's not forget the thousands of people "stuck" in the Middle East and what the repercussions of this attack might mean for them.

— Cynthia Jennings,
Helotes

Unleash U.S. might

It is time for the United States to exert its might and strike back at these terrorists, whoever or wherever they are.

— George Flores



DIANE BONDAREFF/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tuesday's terrorist attacks robbed Americans of their sense of security, readers say, and now the United States must respond with all its might.

to identify the attackers and retaliate in kind.

— James P. Ret

Isoroku Yamamoto after the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941.

America is now awake.

— James Pezzaro

A call to arms

This is a dark and terrible day in the history of our country. We are at war, without any doubt.

I remember Pearl Harbor; within a heartbeat, I enlisted and was in combat in the South Pacific.

I can't imagine that there would be any doubt in the mind of today's youth that they are needed to defend this country. I'm willing to do it again and would hope to see long lines at enlistment sites as I saw in 1941.

— Leonard Dallas,
Converse

Let the flags fly

I believe everyone in the city who has an American flag should fly it for as long as it takes to find the people who think our capital can be attacked.

My late husband was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. He would have never believed that airplanes have to patrol the skies to keep the United States safe.

We have to mourn all the people who lost their lives Tuesday. And we have to show support for our president, regardless of party lines.

Let those flags fly. Mine has been out since Tuesday morning.

— Eva Duken



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Focus ... cont'd

Blame the lack of spies

Who is to blame? There will be a lot of finger-pointing. In the forefront will be the politicians, singling out the intelligence community for not providing advance warning of the attack.

But the blame itself is on the shoulders of Congress. After the Watergate debacle and in hysterical haste, it emasculated the human intelligence-collection ability of the United States.

While electronic communications intercept messages and satellite imagery can fulfill more than 90 percent of the nation's intelligence-collection requirement, the other small percentage can only be done by someone physically on the scene — the covert source.

Congress has to put aside petty partisan bickering and reinstitute an aggressive human intelligence program, and the executive branch has

Wake up to the truth

It's terrible to have to say this, but the tragedy perpetrated by terrorists Tuesday may be what is needed to wake this country, and its population, from its lethargy and misconceptions about the world today.

We are, indeed, at war. A war so unusual and different from all other wars, we have been slow to see it.

War is waged by whatever means the combatants have at their command. Terrorists have little in the way of armies, air forces or navies. Their battles are not designed to be fought along lines of battle, across borders or at sea.

For this reason, we have underestimated them and their power to hurt us and disrupt our way of life. I hope the American people and the government move forcefully and effectively to "gear up" for this kind of war. We must attack terrorists wherever they train, live and plan their atrocities.

Some of the trappings of "formal" warfare will become obsolete. There is nothing nice about fighting terrorists. The old rules are out the window.

The bleeding hearts around the world won't like it, but we must wake up now and realize we are at war.

— Lowell J. Grabau

Giant again roused

"I am afraid, we have awoke a sleeping giant."

This was spoken by Japanese Adm.

Punish terrorism backers

Perhaps now our representatives in Washington will see fit to punish the country or countries that supported terrorist attacks, rather than a single individual or a small group.

These terrorism supporters must also be blamed for the thousands of lives that will be lost as our military retaliates for these horrible acts.

In addition to a very significant military response, I suggest our government immediately terminate all forms of aid to nations that support terrorism.

Perhaps if our nation had taken a harder line with supporters of terrorism in the past, the country or countries involved would have withheld such support to avoid the military action that now must come.

— Charles Sutton

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KEESLER PUBLIC AFFAIR Fax:2283773940

Sep 12 2001 7:07 P.02

By Penny Jenifer
Keesler News Editor

Keesler activated force protection and information condition measures Tuesday morning due to apparent terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

The actions were in response to Air Force-wide directives issued by Gen. John Jumper, the chief of staff.

A toll-free telephone service was activated at the Air Force News Agency in San Antonio. The hot line telephone number is (800) 253-9276. Lines are staffed continuously until further notice to answer general questions from family members about Air Force people possibly affected by the attacks.

Also in San Antonio, the Air Force Personnel Center stood up the Personnel Readiness Center - in charge of keeping track of Air Force people.

The Air Force will establish accountability for everyone stationed either permanent party or on temporary duty in New York and the Washington area, AFPC officials said.

"We want everyone affected by this crisis to know we're doing everything we can to account for their loved ones," said Maj. Gen. Michael McMahan, AFPC commander. "We've got people working around the clock accounting for and offering assistance to everyone affected by this tragic event."

At Keesler, FPcon Alpha was activated at 8:15 a.m., only minutes after the second of two commercial airliners crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. By 11 a.m., the base was at FPcon Delta, the highest level of the system designed to protect people and resources.

As the level of the alert rose, entry controllers of the 81st Security Forces Squadron were reinforced. Military working dog teams joined the gate guards in enforcing 100 percent identification checks and conducting bumper-to-bumper inspections of vehicles attempting to enter the base.

Other precautions Tuesday included closing the Judge Sekul Avenue Gate, commissary, exchange, post office, Keesler Federal Credit Union and all 81st Services Division facilities, restriction of non-prior service students to the base, and cancellation of the NCO Academy graduation dinner and college classes.

Duty reporting times for all organizations except the 81st Training Group were staggered to ease congestion at the gates. Personnel of the 81st TRG reported for duty at their normal times.

The crisis action team and unit and group control centers went to 24-hour staffing.

Infocon Alpha was activated at 10:20 a.m., restricting the use of computer network resources, including e-mail and the Internet, to mission essential activities. Personnel were also advised to limit their use of phones. The base went to Infocon Bravo at 4:25 p.m.

Later Tuesday, prayer services were held in the Triangle and Fishbowl chapels.

The heightened security measures remained in effect Wednesday, even as personnel from the 81st Medical Group were being deployed to assist in recovery efforts.

Air Force Print News and the Air Force Personnel Center contributed to this report.

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